DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 344 793 SO 020 374

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TITLE	Police-School Partnerships. Bar/School Partnership Programs Series.
INSTITUTION	American Bar Association, Chicago, Ill. Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC. Office of Law-Related Education.
PUB DATE	88
CONTRACT	G00874520
NOTE	9p.; For related documents, see EJ 335 155, and SO 020 368-378.
AVAILABLE FROM	American Bar Association, 750 N. Lake Shore Dr., Chicago, IL 60611 (Order No. 497-0006, $1.00).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Citizenship Education; Community Resources; Curriculum Enrichment; Elementary Secondary Education; Field Trips; Guides; *Human Resources; *Law Enforcement; *Law Related Education; Learning Activities; *Police; *Police School Relationship; Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS	American Bar Association

ABSTRACT

Law-related education's (LRE) use of community resources in general, and law enforcement professionals in particular, is what brings the law to life in the classroom. This handbook offers practical ideas for establishing partnerships to improve the quality of LRE in the classroom. Involving police and law enforcement officers in the classroom offers several benefits: (1) the complex role of law enforcement in the community is demonstrated; (2) students develop an understanding of the concept of justice; and (3) a complete and realistic picture of police officers, including the human component, is presented. Three models are discussed. In the integrated model, the teacher designs the lesson and incorporates the officer. In the autonomous model, the resource person takes sole responsibility for the development and implementation of an entire unit. The on-site model gives students a realistic view of the daily challenges presented to people who choose law enforcement careers. Procedures for conducting field trips and for role playing are provided. Previsit strategies and suggestions for the resource person are offered. Six examples of other materials available dealing with the involvement of law enforcement resources in the classroom are provided. (JB)

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Police-School Partnerships

BY JUDITH ZIMMER

SO 021 374

American Bar Association

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This is the thirteenth in a series of handbooks on bar/school partnerships produced by the American Bar Association's Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship, 750 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611, 312/988-5725.

This handbook is made possible by a grant from the Law-Related Education Office of the U.S. Department of Education, Grant Number G00874520. We express our gratitude to the Department for its support of this project to improve bar-school partnerships, of which the handbook series is a part.

Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the American Bar Association or the Department of Education.

The purpose of this handbook is to give law enforcement professionals and teachers practical ideas for establishing partnerships to improve the quality of law-related education in the classroom.

Police-school partnerships may be a new idea in some localities. In others, they may be part of a growing movement to more closely involve the community in the schools, especially to build better understanding of and appreciation for law.

Introduction

Ours is a society of laws. We have mechanisms for developing laws, enforcing them, and deciding what to do when they are violated. But how does a young person growing up in our society learn about the law? How do we formulate our opinions about the public servants who carry out various responsibilities under the law?

The truth is that we do not do a very good job of explaining our laws and the concept of justice to people during their formative years. Instead we bombard them with information from civics and government texts and hope that they will see themselves as part of the community. By contrast, law-related education (LRE) teaches students to become effective, law-abiding, involved citizens by bringing law to life in the classroom. LRE seeks to equip students with a clear understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities and with the ability to avoid and even resolve disputes. LRE also develops in students a feeling for justice that is critical to participation in a democratic society.

What exactly is LRE? According to U.S. Department of Education regulations that support the federal Law-Related Education Act of 1978, LRE is defined as, "Those organized learning experiences that provide students and educators with opportunities to develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes and appreciations necessary to respond effectively to the law and legal issues in our complex and changing society."

The Role of Resource People

LRE's use of community resources in general, and law enforcement professionals in particular, is what actually brings the law to life in the classroom. Without such resources, law-related education will provide information but no bridge to the community.

The success of LRE is due, at least in part, to the motivational design of the teaching strategies and the strong participation of lawyers, judges, police, and other community resources. While it is certainly true that students find legal information compelling, the participatory strategies are what hook students and maintain their interest. Eighty-seven percent of the students surveyed by the Department of Justice said that they found law-related education more interesting

What Materials Are Available?

The National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law (25 E Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20001; telephone: (202) 662-9620) is available for additional materials and information on the involvement of law enforcement resources in the classroom.

The many excellent materials available in law and the criminal justice system include:

- *Street Law: A Course in Practical Law* (3rd ed.), a secondary text covering criminal, consumer, family, housing, and individual rights law. The student edition has many ready-to-use strategies, including role-plays, small group activities, case studies, and simulations which would be enhanced by the involvement of a law enforcement officer.
- *Teens, Crime and the Community/Education and Action for Safer Schools and Neighborhoods*, an 11-lesson curriculum that informs students about the nature and effects of crime and gives them the necessary skills to help make their schools and communities safer. Among the topics are: child abuse, violent crime, property crime and vandalism, drunk driving, acquaintance rape, substance abuse, shoplifting, criminal and juvenile justice. (To order either of these resources, contact: West Educational Publishing, P.O. Box 64526, St. Paul, MN 55164-1002; telephone: (800) 328-2209.)
- *Police Patrol* is a simulation game published by the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF). It places students in the roles police officers handle in typical situations. In use for many years and time-tested, it is an outstanding tool to improve students' understanding of the police. In addition, it provides a natural springboard for discussion when police are serving as resources in the classroom. (To order, contact CRF at 601 S. Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90005; telephone: (213) 487-5590)
- *The Law Enforcement Officer-Educator Partnership: A Model for Using Law Enforcement Officers in Law-Related Education and Citizenship Education Classrooms.* This 65-page manual is based upon model experiences in Michigan and St. Louis. Order from: Phi Alpha Delta Public Service Center, Suite 325E, 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814; telephone: (301) 961-8985.
- *Authority* is one of the eight concepts highlighted in the Law in a Free Society curriculum. The authority portion of this curriculum – six units which cover every level from kindergarten through high school – helps students gain the understanding and skills necessary to develop reasoned and responsible positions regarding authority. Included are many activities, as well as a videotaped series on authority for grades 3-6. (To order: contact the Center for Civic Education, 5146 Douglas Fir Road, Calabasas, CA 91302; telephone: (818) 340-9320.)
- Law in Action Series: For grade levels five to eight, this series includes: *Young Consumers, Lawmaking, Juvenile Problems and Law, Courts and Trials, Juvenile Responsibility and the Law, Conflict, Courts and Trials* and *Understanding Law Enforcement*. Order from: West Publishing Company, 50 West Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55164; telephone: (612) 228-2289.

than any other social studies course. Nationally, LRE courses have grown faster than any other area of social studies during the past ten years.

Despite the proven success of resource people in LRE courses, recent evaluations show that teachers who have been involved in law-related education for several years tend to use resource people less frequently than teachers who are new to LRE. One possible reason for this phenomenon is that as teachers become more familiar and comfortable with the content of LRE, they feel less need for outside resources. But according to the evaluation, this reduces educational quality because the involvement of community resources is so important to the classroom use of LRE.

How Do Young People Think Police View Them?

The 1985 Minnesota Youth Poll, conducted by the Center for Youth Development at the University of Minnesota, asked young people how they think they are perceived by key adults in their lives. Among those key adults were police. Others were parents, teachers, and senior citizens. Since they're at a critical period for building their self-image, adolescents can be greatly influenced by their view of adult perceptions.

Two-thirds of those surveyed believed that they were negatively perceived by these key adults, and almost fifty percent fell into the "extremely negative" category. In a separate 1985 poll, 97 percent of Chicago area youth also thought that adult perceptions of them were negative.

When the Minnesota pollsters compared all the categories, police images were overwhelmingly negative. Only 12 percent of students believed that police viewed them positively, a lower percentage than that for any other adult category. The following comments by participants, drawn from a summary of the poll, illustrate how young people think they are perceived by police:

- Elementary students think that the police view them as: "Average dumb people." "Not much." "Nice kids." "Dumb girls and crazy boys." "They think that girls are sugar and spice and boys are creeps."
- Junior high students think that the police view them as:

"Is That What Police Really Do?": Interviewing a Police Officer

This activity may be used to prepare elementary students for an interview with a local police officer. Students compare what they have observed on television about police duties to an actual police officer's job description. Teachers should coordinate their efforts with the law enforcement resource person so that he or she is aware of the children's preparations and expectations.

Procedures Prior to Police Officer's Visit

1. On the board, write the names of five or six TV police officers. Use current TV programs or names that your class will recognize readily (e.g., "Barney Miller," "Hill St. Blues," or "Cagney and Lacey"). Ask the children what these names have in common (all police shows).
2. After it has been determined that the list is of television police shows, have children make a chart on a piece of paper. The chart should have two columns, labeled "Police Show" and "Jobs the Police in the Show Do." Ask them to take the sheet home for one week. Every time they watch a show that has a police officer in it, they should write the name of the show and what the police were doing. You may wish to send home a letter to parents to explain the assignment. The sheet will be used later in this activity.
3. Following the television assignment, have students discuss what the TV police do. Record their observations on a wall chart with the same two headings, "Police Shows" and "Jobs the Police in the Shows Do." Ask students (a) if they have any additional ideas about what police do; (b) which of the tasks recorded takes most of the police officer's time; (c) which are the most exciting? frustrating? heartwarming?
4. Tell the children that they are going to see whether their ideas match what some real police officers do. Tell the children that a police officer is going to visit them. Ask them what kinds of things they might like to ask him/her. Record the suggestions on chart paper so that they can refer to them during the interview. Interests will probably include how he/she got the job, does he/she carry a gun, who can become a police officer, etc.

For the Police Officer's Visit

Place the chart of "television police" on the chalkboard. Students will interview the police officer, and, with his or her help, complete a second chart of actual police duties. How do the two charts compare? Do the children think television focuses on what police really do?

Adapted with permission from Educating for Citizenship 3 *(Rockville, Maryland: Aspen Systems Corporation, 1982), pp. 123-124.*

"Regular kids." "Some probably think we're troublemakers." "They're not apt to believe us but believe us more than little kids." "They think we are all brats." "They watch us when we go into the Target stores."

- Senior high students think that the police view them as: "Rebellious." "Delinquent troublemakers." "We are reckless and try to do things just to upset them." "All we want to do is party."

The results of this poll should not be that surprising. Most of the contact adolescents have with police or law enforcement officers is negative. In the early elementary years, Officer Friendly shows up and builds some rapport, but for many young people that is the only contact until the teenage years.

Why Involve Police in LRE?

Involving police and law enforcement officers in the classroom takes on renewed urgency when viewed through the eyes of young people.

The partnership between the school and the law enforcement community establishes positive contact with young people during their formative years. It breathes new energy into the classroom by connecting students to the reality of police work in the community. It presents a full picture of the responsibilities and concerns of a person who takes on the job of police officer, including the human dimension. Such involvement also communicates real legal information which will be useful to students in their lives in the community.

The goals of the partnership between the schools and the law enforcement community are:

- to offer a high quality learning experience for students;
- to demonstrate the complex role of law enforcement in the community;
- to present a complete and realistic picture of police officers, including the human component (strengths and weaknesses);
- to help students develop an understanding of the concept of justice;
- to stimulate development of critical thinking and decision-making skills as they relate to legal rights and responsibilities.

How Does the Partnership Work?

The use of resource people in the classroom is not a new idea in education. In fact, community resources have long

been involved in schools. The important point here is that the impact of the use of such resources has been measured, and specific information about how to use them most effectively has been developed.

The core of the partnership is the acknowledgement that the teacher and the law enforcement person have interlocking responsibilities in the classroom. The teacher designs the objectives, devises the methods, integrates the resource with the lesson, and figures out how to evaluate the lesson. The law enforcement officer strengthens the lesson by contributing knowledge and expertise typically beyond the experience of the teacher. The beneficiaries of the fruits of this alliance are the students. They acquire substantive knowledge and make positive contact with an important community resource.

What Models Are Available?

The development of law-related education has brought renewed emphasis to using community resources in the classroom.

In general, these models can be organized into three categories, first described by Lee Arbetman, Linda Riekes, and Susan Spiegel, in *Social Studies for Teachers and Administrators* (May/June, 1979), p. 3:

- Integrated
- Autonomous
- On-site

These categories are helpful for describing a variety of possibilities for the involvement of law enforcement resources in LRE.

The Integrated Model: Police and Teachers Together

The integrated model is probably the most popular and the most effective. It begins with the teacher designing a lesson and building the law enforcement officer into the plan. For example, let us say the teacher wants to develop a lesson about being a good crime witness. (See handout; lesson ideas appear in the boxes throughout this handbook.) The teacher involves the students in a strategy where they act both as witnesses to the crime and as police officers interviewing the witnesses. After the students who portray police officers have interviewed the witnesses and several crime reports have been read, the visiting law enforcement officer discusses the activity, explaining what is most important to watch for when witnessing a crime and the steps police take in order to solve a crime.

While this method requires more contact and coordination between the teacher and the resource person prior to class, it results in an active, participatory experience. The teacher can be assured under this model that the lesson will fit the objectives of the class. It is the type of educationally

Handout: Are You a Good Witness

This strategy is designed to focus discussion on the importance of being a good witness and the difficulties of accurate and detailed observation.

This strategy is best organized as a class activity. It is also an excellent opportunity to use a police officer as a resource. Use the cartoon in this box and the police report in box on page 6. Divide the class in half and allow half the class to look at the cartoon for 30 seconds. Collect the cartoons when the time is up. The other half of the class will then use the police report forms, and each student will interview another student who observed the crime. The seven-minute interview should try to elicit as much information from the crime scene as possible.

Ask several of the students who were interviewing the witnesses to read their reports. Then have the police officer participate in the debriefing. The officer could critique the reporting and then discuss what information is most important for witnesses to observe and remember when witnessing a crime.

Are You a Good Witness?

Pretend you are a witness. Study this crime scene carefully for 30 seconds. Now, turn the page and write down all the details you can remember to tell the police.

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Taken from Teens, Crime and the Community.

NAME _____
DATE _____
CLASS PERIOD _____

Your Police Report

worthwhile lesson which motivates students and resource people. It also has one additional advantage. If for some reason the law enforcement officer is unable to attend the class, the teacher already has a lesson in place which can be used even without benefit of a resource person.

The Autonomous Model

Sometimes a resource person takes sole responsibility for the development and implementation of an entire unit, or even of several units. A law enforcement professional, for example, could teach a week-long unit on the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments as seen from an enforcement perspective. The teacher would work cooperatively with the resource person, ensuring that the objectives of the unit are accomplished and the students are actively involved in the learning experience. The teacher would also need to be involved in formulating an evaluation of the unit.

This model gives students sustained contact with a law enforcement officer. It also allows for the development of close relationships and breaks down the communication barriers which frequently pose a problem for a resource person. If the law enforcement officer is a woman or member of a minority group, the experience has the added advantage of providing students with exposure to role models who vary from the popular media image.

The police officers involved with this type of experience will also benefit from contact with the students. The two-way communication will give the officers an understanding of the issues on the minds of a significant part of the community.

The On-Site Model

This model gives students a realistic view of the daily challenges presented to people who choose law enforcement careers. There are many ways to approach the organization of an on-site resource experience. One thing that all the approaches have in common is intensive classroom preparation and careful debriefing of the students after the experience. During the preparation for a field trip, students could be put into small groups and assigned specific areas for special concentration during the visit. In the small groups the students should develop observation sheets which would include lists of questions and specific things to watch for in the areas they are about to visit.

One small group of 3-5 students, for example, could be assigned to gather specific information about the job held by a police dispatcher. Other small groups could plan to find out about the detective bureau, the horse patrol, the traffic, internal affairs, narcotics, and crime prevention di-

Procedure for Conducting Field Trips

1. Decide Where to Go: Among the common locations visited by law-related classes are court buildings, correctional facilities, police departments, and government agencies. There are, however, countless other places that might be visited, and more than one visit might be made to the same location. For example, students might visit a civil trial, a criminal trial, and a small claims court—all in the same building.
2. Plan the Visit: As with resource persons, students should be prepared for the visit, and every effort should be made to involve the personnel of the agency or facility visited. For example, if students are going to court, the instructor should contact the clerk of the court to find out the best time of day and most interesting proceeding to attend. Likewise, a judge or attorney might be asked to speak to the students as a way of better explaining the visit. It is also wise to prepare an observation sheet to enable the class to record what they see and learn on the visit.
3. Conduct the Visit: Students should be prepared to ask questions, to watch for specific things, and to record their reactions on the observation sheet. Careful advance planning is the key to a successful field trip.
4. Debrief the Visit: The observation sheets are extremely helpful for debriefing the visit. Students should be asked: What did you see? How did you feel about what you saw? What did you learn from the visit? How did what you learn relate to previous knowledge? What else would you now like to know?

Role-Playing

Role-playing is an activity in which students assume the roles of other persons and act them out. In a role-play, students are usually given an open-ended situation in which they must make a decision, resolve a conflict, or act out the conclusion to an unfinished story.

Purpose

Role-playing is designed to promote student empathy and understanding of others. Acting out the roles of other individuals makes it easier to see others' points of view, including how other people think and feel. Role-playing can give students the opportunity to learn behavior appropriate for various situations. It is also useful for developing critical thinking, decision-making, and assertiveness skills.

Procedure

Conducting a role-play in the classroom involves the following steps:

1. Selection of the Role-Play Situation: There are a number of situations which lend themselves to the use of a role-play. These include individual dilemmas (e.g., dealing with a pushy salesperson, observing a crime, or testifying in court) and conflict resolution situations (e.g., a tenant negotiating with a landlord over the terms of a lease or a police officer confronting a suspected shoplifter). Role-playing can be used to deal with a specific issue or problem, such as whether or not adopted persons should be given access to records which reveal the name and whereabouts of their natural parents. Finally, role-plays are useful for developing students' skills as interviewers, negotiators, assertive consumers, investigators or decision makers.
2. Preparation and Warm-Up: Students should be told the situation or problem and the various roles. If role-playing is new to the class, "warm-up" or introductory activities may be helpful. For example, students might be asked to role-play greeting a long-lost friend, or to role-play the way someone would respond to winning a large sum of money.
3. Select Participants: Students can be assigned roles or the teacher can ask for volunteers. Role-plays may be conducted in front of the entire class, or a number of simultaneous role-plays could be conducted by dividing the class into small groups. Students who do not participate in the role-play should act as observers.
4. Conduct the Role-Play: Students act out the roles the way they think someone faced with the same situation would act in real life. The teacher should not interrupt except to get things moving if they have bogged down. After conducting the role-play it is sometimes useful to have students reverse roles or to conduct the same role-play with different participants. For example, two students might role-play a confrontation between a youth and a police officer. After conducting the role-play once, the student who acted as the youth could assume the role of the police officer and vice versa.
5. Debrief: The role-play activity should be followed by debriefing and evaluation. This is an opportunity for both the participants and the observers to analyze the role-play and to discuss what happened and why. Typical debriefing questions include:
   - How did you feel about the role-play and each of the various roles?
   - Was the role-play realistic? How was it similar to or different from real life? Was the problem solved? If so, how? If not, why not?
   - What, if anything, could have been done differently?
   - What other outcomes were possible?
   - What did you learn from the experience?

visions, the policy for handling domestic violence cases, the crime lab, and any other divisions of interest. This approach has the added benefit of putting small groups of students to work in a variety of places throughout the police department instead of moving one large group all around the station or headquarters. The visit will be a high quality experience because the personnel at the station will have time to really concentrate on the students' questions. When the students return to school, all small groups should report to the class on the information they collected during their visit.

Getting Ready for the Visit: Previsit Strategies

It is really important for the teacher and the law enforcement person to communicate prior to the presentation. A phone call or an informal meeting is probably the best way to establish clear lines of communication. It is also a good idea to include students in the planning stage. They can help ensure that the experience will deal with issues which are most important to them. Sometimes it is difficult to establish this contact because of timing and scheduling problems. Teachers frequently have trouble making and receiving phone calls during the school day. Contact should be scheduled at the most convenient time for both teachers and law enforcement personnel.

There are several important points that need to be discussed to ensure the quality of the classroom experience. The teacher needs to share the goals and objectives of the unit being taught. It is important to review the unit so that the law enforcement officer sees the whole picture. The teacher and the law enforcement person should select a narrow topic for each class. Probably the best lessons are those

Can LRE Reduce Delinquency?

A 1981 national study sponsored by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention found law-related education can reduce delinquent behavior. The factor most critical to the success of LRE as a deterrent to juvenile delinquency was the use of outside resource people, especially police in the classroom. The study also found that properly implemented law-related education can improve students' self-image, reduce their tendency to violence, and lessen their feeling of isolation from other students and teachers. Students involved in law-related education also showed more of an interest in their own education.

The study found that LRE must be well implemented to achieve these results. Proper implementation of a law-related curriculum includes

- use of well-briefed outside resource persons,
- active participation and interaction by students,
- sufficient amounts of high quality instruction,
- careful selection of balanced material,
- involvement of school administrators, and
- peer support for teachers.

that connect to what students are studying or to some other aspect of their lives. During these previsit discussions there should be agreement on the specific objectives for the topic. Frequently the teacher has a specific topic in mind and can help the resource person target a subject and present it in a manner designed to meet the unit objectives. The discussion should also cover the type of foundation the students will have prior to the visit and the type of follow-up strategies that would reinforce the experience after the resource person leaves.

When discussing the class with the resource person, it makes sense to consider the number and age of the students. Additional information that a teacher may want to discuss includes personal interests of students and specific needs of a class. The resource person needs to know what vocabulary words will be familiar to the students and how difficult it may be to get them to participate actively.

The resource person also needs to know the teaching methods used in law-related education (role-plays, brainstorming, small group work, and simulations). The teacher can be very helpful in deciding on the best method to capture the energy of the class. (Some of these methods are outlined in this handbook.) Students should not be asked to read much material during class. It is a good idea to use more than one method during a class period. Instead of just lecturing, involve students by asking them questions, posing hypothetical situations, calling for varying opinions on controversial issues, conducting a role-play with them or having the resource person and the teacher act one out, or having them conduct discussions or otherwise work in small groups.

Discuss all the logistics with the resource person in advance. Questions that sometimes fall by the wayside include the date, time and exact location of the class, parking, and who will make copies of the handouts for the class. Participation will dramatically improve if the students wear name tags, allowing the resource person to address them by name. The ambience created by a resource person who is relaxed and approachable can do a lot to ensure the educational value of the experience.

Materials selected for the class should be balanced. Information and examples should be chosen carefully to avoid selecting things that show exclusively either that the criminal justice system has treated people fairly or that it has treated people unfairly. It is important to present an honest picture and not to be defensive when clear or implied criticisms are expressed. Frank admission that neither the system nor the people who work in it are perfect is essential to students feeling more positive about the system and the police officers who help make it work.

Tips for the Resource Person

The resource person should:

- make references to what happens in the real world, especially situations that relate to young people;
- avoid the temptation to tell "war" stories about the best or worst aspects of being a police officer;
- be enthusiastic and lively, keep eye contact, and use humor;
- encourage students to ask questions about the material that has been covered. The resource person should admit when he or she does not know an answer and tell them he or she will get the answer back to them.

Debriefing the Visit

The teacher should discuss the visit with the students at the next class. What were the important points made by the law enforcement officer? How did the students react to the issues presented by the visitor? Did the officer advocate a particular point of view on any issues? Students should discuss these issues.

Teachers could also emphasize the career education dimensions of the visit. Why did the visitor become a police officer? What does the visitor think are the most important parts of the officer's job?

Finally, students could organize a thank you letter to send to the officer.

Judith Zimmer is a program director at the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law.